



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
March 31, 2006
Lawrence Heritage State Park, MA

Meeting Minutes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: Chairman Dick Cross; Councilors Laura Johnson, Henry Lee, Whitney Hatch, Michael Dutton and Dan Wolf.

Public Attendees: Renata von Tscharnier, Charles River Conservancy; Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells; Dick and Jill Miller, Lake Cochituate Advisory Council; Jim Donovan, South Boston Harbor; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon and Paula Rosewski, citizen of Chelmsford.

DCR Staff in Attendance: Commissioner Stephen Burrington, Marianne Fleckner, Tracy Lawrence, Tricia Singer, Susan Hamilton, Priscilla Geigis, Thom Dugan, John Faro, Jim Beauchesne, Nikki Belmonte, Joe Rotondo and Jack Donahue.

I. Call To Order (1:05 p.m.), Chairman Dick Cross

- a. The group participated in a walking tour of Lawrence Heritage properties for the first 20 minutes, lead by Park Supervisor John Faro.
- b. Chairman Cross remarked on low attendance by Councilors, noting that for several meetings only enough for a quorum (6) have been present. He announced that a correspondence would be sent out followed up by phone calls. Chairman Cross asked the Council members to email him any ideas to encourage attendance. Councilor Johnson questioned the time of day of meetings. Councilor Wolf suggested posting an attendance matrix online.
- c. Chairman Cross announced that he is pursuing Beatrice (Fifi) Nesson to fill the open Suffolk County Council seat.
- d. Chairman Cross reconfirmed three *Strategic Goals* which are: to have an agency capable of delivering world class conservation and recreation services; to demonstrate progress towards world class parks; and to generate public appreciation and support for the resources we manage.

II. Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Stephen Burrington

a. Lake Cochituate invasive species plan

- i. DCR staff has heavily researched the different control method options for various invasives across the state with an open mind.
- ii. Key factors driving the decision for the Lake Cochituate plan: the three invasive species cause severe damage to native species and to recreation; the only known way of eliminating one of the species is the application of fluorodone, an acceptable means of control in surface drinking water supplies according to EPA and other regulatory agencies; the impacts of applying fluorodone do not outweigh the impacts of not applying it; and the invasives will spread further if not controlled, creating a larger problem – and potentially requiring use of larger quantities of herbicide -- in the future.
- iii. The plan involves a combination of installation of matting, chemical application, and subsequent maintenance of the weed-free state using hand pulling and other

methods. Since Cochituate is not a contained water body, control mechanisms such as weevils would be gradual and uncertain.

b. Greylock Glen Outdoor Recreation Center

- i. Greylock Glen property has been subject to many development proposals in past decades that had unacceptable environmental impacts and also didn't offer truly significant economic development benefits to the community.
- ii. A joint proposal for an outdoor recreation center by the Town of Adams and Mass Audubon, Mass College of Liberal Arts, Mass MOCA and the Appalachian Mountain Club was presented at a public meeting on Mar. 30. This would complement the Town of Adams's downtown revitalization activities.

c. Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls

- i. Another example of small town Smart Growth revitalization to which DCR is contributing. A new bike path along river and visitor center for the entire Connecticut River Valley are two main features.

III. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

a. Finance Committee, *Whitney Hatch*

- i. The Committee submitted a letter to Senate and House Ways and Means committees regarding their budget submissions.
- ii. The Committee trying to schedule meetings with the Chairs of the Ways and Means committees as well as the House Speaker.
- iii. The Committee met with Kathy Abbott from the Trust for Public Land's Conservation and Recreation Campaign to discuss how to create funding for MA parks and aspire to world-class standard.

Councilor Lee questioned how DCR fits into the long term wealth of Massachusetts. He noted that a downturn in the economy can cause government programs to go bankrupt. The Council should focus on funding at a larger level beyond specific line items.

Councilor Wolf suggested that the Council keep in mind the relationship DCR has with statewide tourism, quality of life, arts and culture. He suggests that the Council should educate the legislature using these angles. Councilor Wolf also suggested that DCR examine a few representative parks in isolation and see how under budget they really are.

b. Policy Committee, *Laura Johnson*

- i. A conference call discussion took place discussing the role of the Committee, what resources are available and the process by which policy issues are addressed.
- ii. The Committee will be focused on true policy and not operating procedures. They expect DCR to consult them on external policies and would like a schedule to review. A formal request to meet with DCR to discuss the process and set the agenda with a designated staff person was made.

Commissioner Burrington offered Tricia Singer as the point person for policy.

Councilor Johnson also voiced her concern that the Stewardship Council could be a court of last resort. She recommends the Policy Committee develop guidelines outlining what is appropriate for Council consideration and clarity on how matters can be put on the agenda.

c. Resource Management Plan Committee, *Henry Lee*

- i. The Committee received the draft RMP for Forefathers National Monument, which may be presented for formal vote at the April meeting.
- ii. The Committee is concerned about the initiation of the larger RMP process within the next 60 days and how the work will be accomplished.

Commissioner Burrington stated that Leslie Luchonok will be laying out options for completing the RMP work for consideration.

Councilors Johnson, Dutton, Lee, Wolf and Cross all felt strongly that the most beneficial and cost efficient way to conduct the RMP work would be through hiring staff for the program, hence building institutional knowledge.

III. Motion to Approve Council Meeting Minutes From March 3, 2006 - All in favor

VI. Public comment

- a. **Dick Miller** from the Lake Cochituate Advisory Committee promoted the use of floating circulators to combat the 2 of the 3 invasive species. The circulators can cover 10-40 acres each, run on solar panels and have a 25 year life expectancy. Three demonstration unit are available free of cost. Mr. Miller asked the Stewardship Council to encourage DCR to (1) accept donation of 3 floating circulators to use at Lake Cochituate (2) expedite early installation of the units for this summer (3) include Mr. Miller in the proceedings and (4) consider the vendors of the units for matching OPPP funds.
- b. **Jill Miller** from the Lake Cochituate Advisory Committee stated her support for testing of floating circulators.
- c. **Renata von Tschanner** from the Charles River Conservancy stated a concern that Storow Drive Tunnel design may focus more on road engineering than the parkland as a whole. She encouraged DCR to be advocates for the parkland.
- d. **Paula Rosewki** from Chelmsford stated her concern that the Bellegarde Boathouse has not been open to public yet this season and inquired about plans for facility. Commissioner Burrington referred to Priscilla Geigis, who stated that the bay and garage are being made available and a partnership with UMass (an item in an outside section that may be honored) will address the remodeling of the building.
- e. **Heidi Ricci** from the Forest & Parks Partnership thanked the Council for the good work they are doing and noted that it is making a difference.
- f. **Mike Ryan** from the Friends of the Fells hopes the guidelines for Historic Parkways would be completed by June 30. He is unclear as to how the guidelines will work within individual projects. Mr. Ryan left a copy of a Connecticut study for review.

Meeting adjourned 3:46